MEETING OF THE NUECES RIVER AND CORPUS CHRISTI BAY AND BAFFIN BAY BASIN AND BAY AREA STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE (NUECES BBASC)
10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.
LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER, 1101 CAMPBELL AVENUE, JOURDANTON, TX
APRIL 25, 2012

Minutes

Members Present: Con Mims, Chair; James Dodson, Vice Chair; Ray Allen; Paul Carangelo; Gus Gonzalez; Don Roach; Carola Serrato; Wes Tunnell; Buddy Stanley; Mike Mahoney; Tom Ballou; Joel Pigg; John Adams; Susan Lynch; Scotty Bledsoe, Teresa Carillo

1. Call to order
Chairman Con Mims called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call
Roll call was taken and a quorum was reached.

3. Public comment
There were no public comments at this time.

4. Approve Minutes
The members reviewed and approved the February 22 and March 28, 2012 minutes with slight revisions.

5. Comments from SAC liaison
None

6. Comments from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
None

7. Discussion with Kathy Alexander, Technical Specialist to the Water Supply Division, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on dedication of wastewater return flows to support inflows to the Nueces Bay and Delta
At the request of the BBASC, Kathy Alexander, TCEQ, discussed the concept of using treated wastewater as a way to help control salinities and improve estuarine habitat in the Nueces Delta. She noted that to deliver return flows via bed & banks, an entity would need to apply for a water right permit and all factors determining conditions would be site specific, with the intended purpose of use of return flows being considered. The members discussed existing studies to evaluate this use of wastewater dedication. The members agreed to include recommendations for wastewater dedication not in the recommendations report but in the work plan for adaptive management.

8. Activities of the Public Information/Education Program Subcommittee and the BBASC's public information consultant, The Rodman Company

The members discussed deliverables recommended by the public information subcommittee, including a fact sheet and website on the SB3 process. They agreed that the primary audience would be public officials and informed leaders knowledgeable of long term water supply planning. All deliverables will be reviewed with input from the public information subcommittee before being finalized.

9. Schedule and responsibilities for drafting the BBASC's Recommendations Report

The members agreed that all sections of the recommendation report drafted by an individual will be approved by the full BBASC and will remain open for revision through the end of the approval process. BBASC alternate Jace Tunnell reviewed the outline and schedule for development of the recommendations report, noting completed sections and discussing the sections that will need to be drafted by the next (May 23, 2012) meeting. He requested that members begin to review those portions of the report that have been completed so the group can begin to address any comments or suggested revisions.

10. Activities of the Modeling Subcommittee and technical presentations on modeling funded by Texas Water Development Board and/or City of Corpus Christi

Chairman Mims explained that the technical consultants (HDR, Inc.) are performing model runs to demonstrate how the BBEST recommended flow regimes would affect water supplies in future permitting actions. This is being done in order to have a better understanding of the impact of the BBEST recommendations to inform the BBASC response. Sam Vaugh, HDR, explained that the analysis being performed was to inform the BBASC in two ways: 1) by identifying firm yield for both regional water planning group planned projects and theoretical example projects, as well as 2) the resulting flows, the indication that what the BBASC can choose to do has ecological ramifications and flows are the starting point for their evaluation. For planned water supply projects, preliminary evaluations were presented based on four different criteria: 1) no environmental flow standards, 2) the TCEQ default methodology, 3) using regional water planning models, and 4) application of full BBEST recommendations. For 3 theoretical example projects, preliminary evaluations were presented based on: 1) no environmental flow standards, 2) application of full BBEST recommendations, and 3) a range of potential modifications to the BBEST recommendations. Cory Shockley, HDR, reviewed the results of model outputs for each of these scenarios and discussed the initial conclusions from this evaluation. Pursuant to the 4/3/2012 request of the BBASC, Mr. Shockley defined and presented preliminary evaluations of a "Modified BBEST" scenario (including an overbank exemption, a pulse exemption rule, a single tier of seasonal average condition base flows, and a 50% rule for diversions between seasonal base and subsistence flows) for BBASC consideration. The BBASC agreed to ask the technical consultants, with support from the BBEST and TWDB, to evaluate the environmental effects of applying the modified BBEST scenario to each of the 3 theoretical example projects in terms of relationships between flow and species habitat and sediment transport. The BBASC also requested evaluation of an alternative modified BBEST scenario using the 50% rule applied to wet (high) base flows for discussion at the next meeting. Quantitative evaluations of environmental effects will be performed for 3 sites (Nueces River at Laguna, Cotulla, and Three Rivers) at which quantitative data is available, one for each ecoregion in the study area.

Regarding freshwater inflows to Nueces Bay and Delta, Mr. Shockley began by comparing the BBEST recommendations against the 2001 agreed order using the Corpus Christi Water Supply Model. He also explained the differences in how each should be considered. In evaluating different scenarios he is looking to explain three different aspects: 1) what is the inflow to bay and delta and how does it change, 2) affects to system yield, and 3) what is the reservoir storage and how does it change. He presented the model outputs regarding these different scenarios. After discussion the members directed the technical consultants to continue this analysis, refining the bay and estuary analysis and providing flows for the TxBLEND analysis to be performed by the TWDB.

Member Ray Allen provided a handout showing simulated freshwater inflows to Nueces Bay. He explained what water would be available for the Nueces Delta under different scenarios (e.g. no pumping). This takeaway message is that, if you have some water management of the system and can focus it on Rincon Bayou and Nueces Bay and Delta, you will see ecological benefits even in drought years (2011). After discussion, the members agreed to direct the BBASC work group to evaluate and bring back next month a recommendation as to how to proceed. All BBASC members are invited to attend the meetings of the BBASC work group.

11. Strategies to meet environmental flow recommendations
This topic was addressed in earlier discussions and will be continued in future meetings.

12. Future activities and responsibilities of the BBASC
The next BBASC meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on May 23, 2012. The meeting will again be held at the Jourdanton, TX Library and Community Center.

13. Public comment
Norman Johns, National Wildlife Federation, suggested that the BBASC not lessen the strategies discussion in the main body of their recommendations report. He noted there is value in including this discussion in the BBASC report as well as in the work plan for adaptive management.

14. Adjourn